



Fourth Grade Footsteps of Lincoln



Photo Courtesy Manchester Historic Association

As a fourth grade teacher, I'm always trying to tell the stories of American history in ways my students can relate to. New Hampshire is a gold mine of interesting places and stories, since so much happened right here in our own backyard.

Still, you need to cover the basics – Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and company. I try to bring the past alive by having the kids experience life as it would have been for them in the period we're studying. Places like [Strawbery Banke](#) in Portsmouth and the [Fort at No. 4](#) in Charlestown work to relate the past to children and adults, alike. But even in New Hampshire, there are elements of American history that are not as approachable because they did not happen here. It's a challenge history teachers face every day as we try to connect with our past.

So you'll appreciate the thrill I got when I found out that Abraham Lincoln spent five days in New Hampshire in 1860! It is very likely that New Hampshire played a major role in introducing the Illinois Senator to the nation during the run up to the Convention and Presidential campaign that year. I planned some field trips for my class around President Lincoln's visit to New Hampshire so they could experience history first hand.

Concord

We'll start with a trip to the state capital of Concord even though it's the second place Lincoln visited, on March 1st, 1860 (he stopped in Exeter first, because his son Robert, then 16, was a student at Phillips Exeter Academy). In the [State House](#) itself (107 North Main Street) on the exact day of his 200th birthday, February 12, 2009, a Lincoln re-enactor gave the Gettysburg Address, standing under the portrait of himself in Representatives Hall. I plan to take the kids to see the actual room where it happened.

The New Hampshire State House is the oldest in the country that is still used for its original purpose as the place where legislative sessions are held. Plus our legislature is one of the largest in the country – it's a good place to talk to kids about how we get involved to make a difference in our own state government.

In addition to the portraits of Lincoln, Washington, Franklin Pierce (the only President from New Hampshire) and Daniel Webster, there's a portrait of Senator Joseph Hale. He was from Dover, was an avid abolitionist in Lincoln's time – and his daughter Lucy was engaged to John Wilkes Booth, who would later assassinate President Lincoln in 1865.



I plan to show my students the huge painting of the battlefield at Gettysburg at the State House, as well as the portraits of Civil War generals from New Hampshire and their flags. Then we'll go across the street to the Tuck Library (30 Park Street), where the [New Hampshire Historical Society](#) has its exhibit, "Abraham Lincoln and New Hampshire."



Fourth Grade Footsteps of Lincoln



Photo Courtesy Exeter Historical Society

This exhibit gives a good overview of Lincoln's life, the Presidency and the assassination. As it happens, a doctor from Concord was the one who stood the death watch when the President was brought from Ford's Theater, across to the boarding house. Dr. Ezra Abbott recorded his last life signs and kept a piece of the coat that had been cut away to reach the bullet. It's in a special frame in the exhibit, along with Lincoln's penknife that came to New Hampshire via William Chandler who was Lincoln's choice for JAG in the Navy in 1865. Mary Todd Lincoln gave the knife to her husband's footman and messenger Charles Forbes, who gave the knife to C.E. Creecy at the Treasury Department, who later presented it to Chandler, who then gave it to the NH Historical Society in 1880 for safekeeping and display.

We'll walk across the State House paths to Main Street, past the Court House where Lincoln stopped to meet Judge Asa Fowler before his speech. And we'll look at what's left of Phenix Hall (40 North Main Street), where he spoke. People said New Hampshire had never heard anything like him. I'll bring the newspaper story to read to the kids as we walk.

Manchester

Our next trip – like Lincoln's on March 1st, 1860 – will be to Manchester. We will tour the Amoskeag Manufacturing Mills as he did, only we will spend time in the "Abraham Lincoln: Manchester Remembers" exhibit at the [Millyard Museum](#) in Mill No. 4. Presented by the Manchester Historic Society, this exhibit shows what Manchester was like in 1860 and explores the impact his visit, the Civil War and the assassination had on local people.

On the night of March 1st, Manchester businessman Frederick Smyth, introduced Lincoln at Smyth Hall as "the next President of the United States." The newspaper reported, "We think most of the [crowd] went away thinking better of him than they anticipated they should..." After staying overnight at City Hotel, Lincoln toured the mills with Smyth the next morning, before catching a train to get back to Exeter so Robert could get back to school.

Exeter

Speaking of the train, I'm already thinking about getting the class aboard the [Amtrak Downeaster](#) on its afternoon trip from Exeter, because we can trace the train ride Lincoln took from Exeter to Dover on March 2nd, 1860. The year 2010 is the 150th anniversary of the trip and that's when everyone in Exeter – the [American Independence Museum](#), [Exeter Historical Society](#), Phillips Exeter Academy, the [Exeter Public Library](#) and the local schools will celebrate.

We could spend a long morning in Exeter, touring the Phillips Exeter Academy campus, visiting Second Church where Lincoln and Robert attended services on Sunday, March 4, 1860, and taking a walking tour downtown. I think they'll like the view of the Exeter River at the falls, where Lincoln stopped to talk to a young printer's apprentice when he was out for a stroll before breakfast. We'll visit the American Independence Museum and the other Lincoln exhibits and then take the 1:00 pm train to Dover. Just like Lincoln.

*"We can trace the train ride
Lincoln took from Exeter to
Dover on March 2nd, 1860.
The year 2010 is the 150th
anniversary of the trip."*

Fourth Grade Footsteps of Lincoln

Dover

[The Woodman Institute Museum](#) (182 Central Ave.) has opened their special Lincoln Bicentennial Exhibit. One of the most interesting pieces in their collection – which every kid I've taken there loves – is Lincoln's saddle. He rode in it when reviewing the surrendered Confederate troops at Appomattox and then gave it to his aide, Col. Daniel Hall, who was from Dover. Also on exhibit is the podium Lincoln spoke from during his two-hour speech on March 2, 1860. And we'll be able to see photographs depicting how Dover looked to young Abe Lincoln when he went for his morning walk on March 3, 1860.



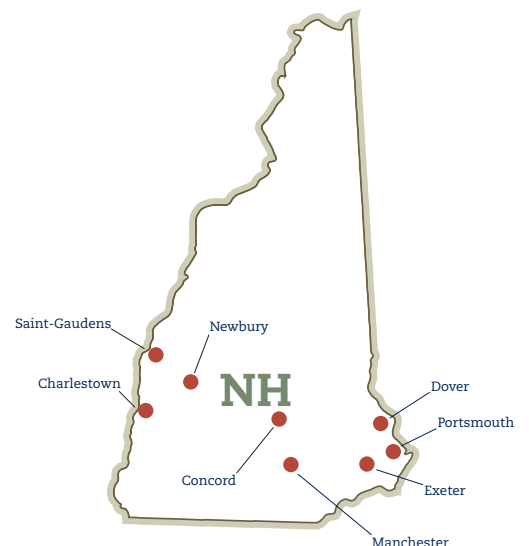
Lincoln Saddle: Gift of Col. Daniel Hall / Woodman Institute Museum

The Lincoln Footsteps tour starts at the Woodman Institute and the Senator John P. Hale home – remember Senator Hale and his daughter Lucy? Then we can see “corporation house” (today referred to as the Lincoln Building) on Locust Street where Lincoln stayed with George Mathewson, superintendent of the Cocheco Mills. [The Children's Museum of New Hampshire](#) is now on the site of the former mill (6 Washington Street), so we'll check out their exhibits and then cross Washington Street to the [Millworks Building](#) and its display and mural depicting what life for the millgirls and boys would have been like in 1860. We may even visit the historic cemetery where Col. Hall is buried.

Other Trips

Future field trips might take us to [The Fells](#) (456 Route 103A) in Newbury on Lake Sunapee, which was the summer home for John Hay. Hay was Lincoln's secretary and he continued service in government all the way to Theodore Roosevelt's time.

And in Cornish, we may visit the home of sculptor [Augustus Saint-Gaudens](#), New Hampshire's only National Historic Site. The “standing Lincoln” sculpture and the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial are both displayed there, along with Saint-Gaudens studio and beautiful gardens.



If you liked this itinerary go to visithn.gov and check out the FORTS, CASTLES, AND KIDS culture itinerary.